

## **Pest Identification**

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# **Domestic Rodents**

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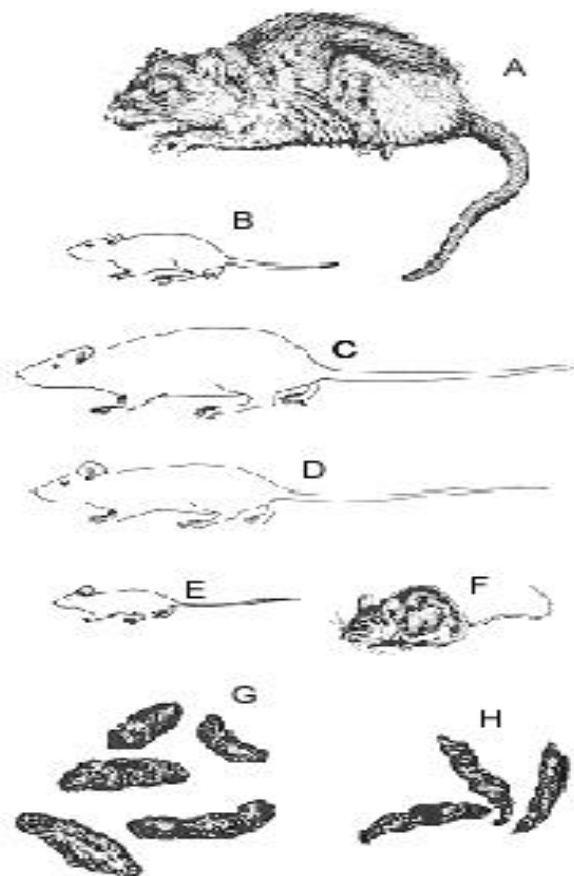
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# Domestic Rodent Identification

## Introduction

Proper identification is an important function of any thorough domestic rodent management program. Knowing a particular rodent's unique biology, habits and characteristics will determine the "how, what, when, and where" of a management program, helping to ensure a successful effort.

## Rodent Characteristics



Commensal rodents. A-C, Norway rat.  
D, Roof rat. E-F, House mouse.  
G, Blunt droppings of Norway rat, enlarged.  
H, Pointed droppings of house mouse, enlarged greatly

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## Domestic Rodent Identification

### House Mouse

- ✎ Tail is 3-4 inches (7-10 cm) long, semi-naked and longer than the head and body combined.
- ✎ Relatively large ears for its size. Eyes are small in proportion to the body.
- ✎ Body is small and slender, 2 to 3 1/2 inches (7-10 cm) long. Average weight is 5/8 to 1 ounce (12-30 g).



### Roof Rat

- ✎ Tail is longer than head and body, 7.5 to 10 inches long (19.1 to 25.4 cm). Top and bottom of tail are the same color.
- ✎ Ears are large and will cover the eyes if bent forward. Eyes are large and prominent. Nose and muzzle are pointed.
- ✎ Body is slender, 6.5 to 8 inches long (16.5 to 20.3 cm). Average weight is 6 to 12 ounces (170.1 to 340.2 g).



## Norway Rat

- ✎ Tail is shorter than head and body, 6 to 8.5 inches (15.2 to 21.6 cm). Tail is darker color on top, lighter color on bottom.
- ✎ Ears are close to the body and do not cover the eyes if bent forward. Eyes are small. Nose and muzzle are blunt.
- ✎ Body is heavy and thick, 7 to 10 inches long (17.8 to 25.4 cm). Average weight is 10 to 17 ounces (283.5 to 481.9 g).



## Commensal Rodent Comparison

Norway Rat <i>Rattus norvegicus</i>	Roof Rat <i>Rattus rattus</i>	House Mouse <i>Mus musculus</i>
<b>Range</b>		
Best suited for temperate zones. Due to their adaptability, found everywhere in the United States.	Best suited for tropical and semitropical zones. Found along the Pacific Coast, in Hawaii and along the lower half of the East Coast, throughout the Gulf states.	Throughout the United States and southwest Canada north to central British Columbia, and along the Pacific Coast to Alaska.
<b>Food Preferences</b>		
Meats, fish, flour, cereal grains, fruits and vegetables. Eats almost any human food. Consumes 3/4 to 1 ounce of food each day. Drinks 1/2 to 1 ounce of water each day. Requires water daily to survive.	Seeds, fruits, vegetables, grain and eggs. Consumes 1/2 to 1 ounce of food each day. Drinks up to 1 ounce of water each day. Water is not essential if everyday food is high in moisture.	Omnivores. Cereal grains, seeds, fruits, vegetables and meats. Seeds are the preferred food. Feed at multiple sites (20-30), eating small amounts at each site. Daily consumption: 1/10 of an ounce.
<b>Habits</b>		
Usually nests in basements and lower portions of buildings. Extensively burrows in soil. Active primarily at night. Good climber, excellent swimmer. Very strong social hierarchy-the biggest and strongest get the best food and harborage.	Usually enters and nests in upper portions of buildings. May nest outside in trees (especially palm), ivy, etc. Burrows very little. Excellent climber. Active at night.	Can be found in cultivated fields, at or below ground level or in the upper stories of skyscrapers. Excellent climber. Inquisitive and explores home range daily.
<b>Color</b>		
Usually grayish-brown, but color may vary from a pure gray to a blackish- or reddish-brown. The underside is gray to yellow-white. Complete black are common.	Color varies from black to brownish-gray; the underside varies from gray to white.	Generally, grayish-brown above, and a very light cream color below. Large ears and a semi-naked tail that is longer than their heads and bodies combined.

Other Names		
Norway Rat	Roof Rat	House Mouse
Wharf, sewer, brown, common, barn, water and gray.	Alex, black, fruit and ship.	Common house mouse, domestic house mouse.
<p><b>Additional Information</b></p> <p><b>Rats</b> explore their territory of 100 to 300 feet daily. Neophobia, or new-object-fear, makes rats extremely cautious about changes in their territory. It takes several days before a rat will accept a new object as part of its environment. Rats reproduce year-round in stable environments that have adequate food, water and harborage to support additional animals. About 30 percent of the females may be pregnant throughout the year in these conditions. Less favorable conditions limit reproduction to summer and autumn. Rats are color blind. The average life span of wild rats is one year. Rats visit fewer food sites than mice. However, rats eat much more at each site than mice.</p> <p>A <b>house mouse's</b> home range is rather limited, ranging approximately 10-30 feet. Mice are extremely curious and will explore their territory daily and any new object introduced into their home range. Prolific breeders, house mice will produce offspring year round under ideal conditions. Mice are also color blind and can recognize objects that are 10 feet or closer. Mice have an average life span of one year. They frequent many feeding sites during their activity period, sampling small amounts of food from each site.</p>		

Information Courtesy of LipaTech